1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	x
3	NATIONAL MEAT ASSOCIATION, :
4	Petitioner :
5	v. : No. 10-224
6	KAMALA D. HARRIS, ATTORNEY GENERAL:
7	OF CALIFORNIA, ET AL. :
8	x
9	Washington, D.C.
10	Wednesday, November 9, 2011
11	
12	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
13	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
14	at 10:04 a.m.
15	APPEARANCES:
16	STEVEN J. WELLS, ESQ., Minneapolis, Minnesota; on
17	behalf of Petitioner.
18	BENJAMIN J. HORWICH, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor
19	General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for
20	United States, as amicus curiae, supporting
21	Petitioner.
22	SUSAN K. SMITH, ESQ., Deputy Attorney General, Los
23	Angeles, California; on behalf of Respondents.
24	
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:04 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first this morning in Case 10-224, National Meat
5	Association v. Harris.
6	Mr. Wells.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF STEVEN J. WELLS
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. WELLS: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	Congress has unmistakably ordained that one
12	set of rules govern animal handling and treatment,
13	inspection and determinations of meat quality for sale
14	at Federally inspected slaughterhouses from California
15	to Maine, and those rules kick in at the slaughterhouse
16	gate and they continue through the sale of the meat by
17	the slaughterhouse. California has enacted its own set
18	of rules regarding nonambulatory animals, rules which
19	were intended to be and are different than and in
20	addition to the Federal rules regarding the handling of
21	nonambulatory animals.
22	Where Federal law sets requirements for
23	receipt and allows for receipt if the if those rules
24	are followed, California law bans receipt of the animals
25	altogether.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: What about purchase? What
- 2 about -- what about the contract to purchase? The
- 3 California law addresses that. Do you -- do you contend
- 4 that that is preempted as well?
- 5 MR. WELLS: We do, Your Honor.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: How so?
- 7 MR. WELLS: Justice Scalia, the reason
- 8 that -- the reason that we do is because to the extent
- 9 that purchase is -- is even relevant with respect to a
- 10 Federally inspected slaughterhouse, I think all the
- 11 parties agree that it occurs on or after the receipt, so
- 12 it's part of the operational process.
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: What if it weren't? What if
- 14 it took place at an auction site apart from the
- 15 slaughterhouse?
- 16 MR. WELLS: Well, Justice Kagan I -- because
- 17 the scope of the FMIA starts at the gate of the
- 18 slaughterhouse and ends with sale, California I think
- 19 could regulate and not -- not have its regulation be
- 20 expressly preempted if it attempted to prevent purchase
- 21 before the purchase occurred.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Or contract of purchase. I
- 23 mean, if the contract of purchase is made apart from the
- 24 slaughterhouse itself, they -- they could make it
- 25 unlawful for the -- the person who raises the animals to

- 1 sell them when they are nonambulatory and unlawful for
- 2 the slaughterhouse to contract to buy them, right, so
- 3 long as the contract is off the premises?
- 4 MR. WELLS: So long as the -- so long as the
- 5 contract -- so long as title didn't pass, Your Honor, or
- 6 the -- it didn't interfere with what happens on the
- 7 premises from the gate through sale, then I believe that
- 8 would not be expressly preempted by --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Okay.
- 10 MR. WELLS: -- by Federal law. There could
- 11 be implied preemption issues, however, in that
- 12 circumstance.
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So your -- your position
- 14 is if the contract for purchase is consummated in some
- 15 way on premises, that's preempted? And so your answer
- 16 to Justice Kagan and Justice Scalia is that if the
- 17 purchase contract occurs before the animals arrive at
- 18 the gate of the slaughterhouse, that that would not be
- 19 preempted?
- 20 MR. WELLS: Not be expressly preempted.
- 21 Again, there may be applied preemption issues, but if
- 22 the law -- I think, Your Honor, if the law is intended
- 23 to target --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, your whole
- 25 argument is on express preemption.

- 1 MR. WELLS: Yes, Your Honor. Absolutely
- 2 right.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You've given up any
- 4 argument on implied.
- 5 MR. WELLS: Before -- we've not raised that
- 6 argument before this Court, that's correct.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Please tell me why you
- 8 think the sale of the meat is expressly preempted? The
- 9 Solicitor General says it's a closer question on sale of
- 10 the meat because the slaughterhouse processes -- the law
- 11 is involved only with the operations and -- of the
- 12 premises and manner of slaughtering.
- MR. WELLS: Right.
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It has nothing to do
- 15 with sales. So why is the sale of the meat preempted?
- 16 MR. WELLS: Your Honor, sale is a -- it is a
- 17 practical step. And the word "operations" as used in
- 18 678, I think all the parties agree it encompasses all
- 19 the practical steps of the slaughterhouse. Sale clearly
- 20 is the last practical step, to which all other practical
- 21 steps are directed. So it is an operational step. It
- 22 would be news to the slaughterhouses that sales is not a
- 23 part of their operations. That's --
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So how about there is a
- 25 law that says you can't slaughter cats, dogs or horses,

1 or you can't sell cats, horse -- dogs or horses for 2 slaughter? 3 MR. WELLS: And Your Honor, I'd have to --4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Or for consumption. 5 MR. WELLS: I'd have to put --6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is that preempted? 7 MR. WELLS: It -- it would be. Well, with respect to cats and dogs, the answer would be no, 8 9 because those are not an amenable species that are 10 subject to inspection at a Federally inspected 11 slaughterhouse, so that's outside the scope of --12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: There is a Federal 13 regulation to that effect? 14 MR. WELLS: No -- yes. Only amenable 15 species can be slaughtered; amenable species are defined at U.S.C. -- 21 U.S.C. section 601 subsection (w). And 16 17 cats and dogs are not amenable species, so --18 JUSTICE ALITO: And what's that definition? MR. WELLS: Well, the definition is -- it's 19 20 kind of a roundabout definition, Your Honor. Amenable species is -- mentions -- I mean, frankly, it mentions 21 22 catfish and -- and other species, and then all of the 23 animals which were amenable species prior to the amendment of the act in 2005. We set that forth in 24 25 footnote 11 of our -- our brief but it clearly includes

- 1 swine and it includes -- it includes horses. It
- 2 includes cattle, obviously.
- JUSTICE ALITO: So the Seventh Circuit
- 4 and -- and I forget what the other circuit -- was were
- 5 incorrect in saying that the -- that the State could
- 6 prohibit the slaughter of horses?
- 7 MR. WELLS: Yes, Your Honor. I believe they
- 8 were incorrect, although I would say that, even under
- 9 the rationale that the Fifth and Seventh Circuits used,
- 10 their rationale would not save this State law. And the
- 11 reason that it wouldn't is, even if you were to decide
- 12 that those statutes -- those cases were decided
- 13 correctly, the rationale that the court used was: We
- 14 can interpret those States' laws in a way that the --
- 15 the laws never have to affect the operations of the
- 16 slaughterhouse, because we can interpret those laws to
- 17 keep the animals off the slaughterhouse -- off premises.
- 18 It's easy to identify what's a horse and
- 19 keep it off the premises. That's not true with
- 20 nonambulatory animals. Nonambulatory animals present
- 21 with the symptom of nonambulatory-ness on the premises,
- 22 or on the trucks that are waiting to arrive on the
- 23 premises. So there is no way that this State law could
- 24 be interpreted in a way not to operate --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Doesn't it seem strange to

- 1 hold that the Federal Meat Inspection Act speaks to an
- 2 issue like that? This doesn't have anything -- whether
- 3 or not horses should be slaughtered and sold and their
- 4 meat should be sold doesn't have anything to do with
- 5 food safety, does it? And it doesn't have anything to
- 6 do with humane treatment, assuming the same methods of
- 7 slaughter are used?
- MR. WELLS: Well, I would disagree, Your
- 9 Honor. It clearly has to do -- this issue clearly has
- 10 to do with both of those issues. As the State has
- 11 admitted on page 6 of its brief, this law was intended
- 12 to address both -- both humane handling of animals,
- 13 which is covered directly in section 603(b) of the -- of
- 14 the Federal --
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: No, I wasn't speaking of the
- 16 California law. I was speaking of the law that
- 17 prohibits the -- the slaughter of horses.
- MR. WELLS: Well --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: That's based just on a
- 20 judgment, a societal judgment that this is an animal
- 21 that should not be slaughtered and sold for food. What
- 22 does that have to do with any of the purposes of the
- 23 Federal Meat Inspection Act?
- MR. WELLS: Well, because Congress has made
- 25 a different -- a different judgment, Justice Alito; and

- 1 what Congress has said is: We have identified -- we
- 2 Congress have made a moral judgment that the following
- 3 species are amenable and may be inspected on
- 4 slaughterhouse premises, and to the extent that the
- 5 State is making a different moral judgment --
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: And that presumably is why
- 7 Congress excluded cats and dogs?
- 8 MR. WELLS: That -- Congress -- correct.
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: So Lassie -- Lassie and
- 10 Kitty are no good?
- 11 MR. WELLS: Congress made a moral judgment
- 12 that --
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: But Dobbin is all right.
- MR. WELLS: I believe that's right, Your
- 15 Honor. It's a moral -- it is a moral judgment by
- 16 Congress as to which animals are going to be amenable
- for slaughter and which ones aren't.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Young, you suggested
- 19 that even if the Seventh Circuit was correct, there
- 20 would still be a difference because of ease of
- 21 identification. You can tell a horse is a horse and
- 22 keep the horse away from the slaughterhouse. Would it
- 23 be possible to say the same thing about nonambulatory
- 24 swine? And I guess my question is, do nonambulatory
- 25 swine usually become nonambulatory in transit or at the

- 1 slaughterhouse, or could you identify such swine
- 2 earlier?
- 3 MR. WELLS: They -- nonambulatory swine
- 4 become nonambulatory -- may become nonambulatory in
- 5 transit. They may become nonambulatory on the
- 6 slaughterhouse premises. The only way that the
- 7 slaughterhouse operator knows that an -- that an animal
- 8 that has been transported has become nonambulatory,
- 9 however, is when the truck is brought onto the premises,
- 10 the gates are thrown open and the animals are shepherded
- off and one of them doesn't move.
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: But -- but I guess the --
- 13 the State could make it unlawful for a rancher -- or --
- 14 what are the people that ship the animals, do you call?
- 15 MR. WELLS: Could be a rancher or a farmer.
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: A rancher or farmer; Could
- 17 make it unlawful for them to ship a -- a nonambulatory
- 18 swine, could -- could they not?
- 19 MR. WELLS: Congress -- Your Honor, Congress
- 20 actually has enacted regulations that don't -- they
- 21 don't apply to slaughterhouses because, again, the scope
- 22 with respect to slaughterhouses started --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, but as far as this
- 24 statute is concerned, it would not preclude a State law
- 25 that forbids a -- a rancher to -- to ship a

- 1 nonambulatory swine, right?
- 2 MR. WELLS: That's correct. There are
- 3 Federal -- I should point out, there are Federal
- 4 regulations that govern the transportation of dead,
- 5 dying and diseased animals. They don't apply to
- 6 slaughterhouses. They may apply in the situation that
- 7 Your Honor is --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I would have thought
- 9 that your argument on sales would apply at the front end
- 10 as well. You say sales can't be regulated because it's
- 11 really just a way to get to the regulation of what goes
- on at the slaughterhouse. Wouldn't that concern also
- 13 apply at the front end?
- MR. WELLS: Well, Your Honor, our argument
- 15 about sales is slightly different, and it's a little
- 16 different than the argument that's being made by the
- 17 government. Our argument with respect to sale is, there
- 18 are requirements specifically regulating sale. That's
- 19 found in 21 U.S.C. section 610(c). That says
- 20 essentially meat may not be sold if it is adulterated
- 21 or, to put it another way, you may sell the meat if it's
- 22 unadulterated. So that's a requirement. It's within
- 23 the scope of the FMIA; it -- it goes directly to sales
- 24 as an operation.
- 25 And it is different than and in addition to

- 1 the State regulation, because what the State -- the
- 2 State adds another condition. They say you may not sell
- 3 the meat if it is from a nonambulatory animal or, looked
- 4 at the other way, you may sell the meat as long as it's
- 5 not from a nonambulatory animal.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, isn't that
- 7 logically not -- doesn't that logically not follow?
- 8 "You may not sell meat if it's been adulterated" doesn't
- 9 mean that you can sell meat so long as it's not been
- 10 adulterated; right?
- 11 MR. WELLS: Well, no. I think --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: One is a limitation,
- 13 not a grant.
- MR. WELLS: Well, I think, though, that
- 15 there were -- I think that -- the Federal -- what the
- 16 Federal Government has done is established a requirement
- 17 for the sale of meat. California has established
- 18 another requirement for the sale of meat.
- 19 Under Federal law, one requirement for the
- 20 sale of meat is that it not be adulterated, that it pass
- 21 through inspection, that it be stamped "USDA approved,"
- 22 all of the conditions that happen at the slaughterhouse.
- 23 The State, though, has set forth a different condition,
- 24 and that is you may not sell that meat unless it comes
- 25 from a nonambulatory animal --

- 1 JUSTICE ALITO: But -- isn't it the case
- 2 that most nonambulatory animals become nonambulatory
- 3 because of the method of transportation that's used? Do
- 4 you dispute the statistics in the brief of the non-State
- 5 Respondent that -- Respondents that -- nationwide,
- 6 approximately 220,000 swine die during transport,
- 7 another 440,000 become nonambulatory during the
- 8 transportation process?
- 9 MR. WELLS: I don't -- Your Honor, the short
- 10 answer is I don't know where those statistics come from
- 11 and to my knowledge they are not accurate. But I don't
- 12 have additional statistics to --
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Do you dispute the fact that
- 14 the -- that ranchers generally do not ship animals that
- 15 are nonambulatory at the time when the trip begins, but
- 16 that most of these nonambulatory animals become
- 17 nonambulatory during the transportation process?
- 18 MR. WELLS: I think that is a fair
- 19 assumption, Your Honor, with respect to pigs that
- 20 present being nonambulatory when -- when the doors to
- 21 the truck are opened. I think that that's correct. I
- think that the practice is not to ship nonambulatory
- 23 animals if you know beforehand that they are
- 24 nonambulatory.
- JUSTICE ALITO: And you think it's difficult

- 1 to identify which animals are nonambulatory? That's the
- 2 difference between horses, that's -- between prohibiting
- 3 the slaughter of horses, because you can tell whether
- 4 it's a horse or a pig, but you can't tell whether a pig
- 5 can walk?
- 6 MR. WELLS: No. It isn't the only
- 7 difference, Your Honor. Really, it -- the -- what I'm
- 8 really saying is the -- the condition of being
- 9 nonambulatory presents on the slaughterhouse premises
- 10 and so there is no way for a law to -- no one for us to
- 11 say that California law can be interpreted in a way that
- 12 will not tell a Federal slaughterhouse what to do and --
- 13 and how to do it with respect to nonambulatory animals.
- 14 That's not true in the horse case. In the horse case,
- 15 you can say keep the horses out, the -- the Federal
- 16 slaughterhouse doesn't have to have anything to do with
- 17 horses. So --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Would it be possible --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can you tell me, if it's
- 20 okay for California to say you can't sell a
- 21 nonambulatory animal, and that that applies to everyone
- 22 off the slaughterhouse premises, is that -- that's
- 23 basically your position. So that if the purchase occurs
- 24 on premises, then the person who is selling it, even if
- 25 it's not the slaughterhouse, can still sell it on the

- 1 premises?
- 2 MR. WELLS: If I understand your question,
- 3 Your Honor, if the -- let's say just for the shorthand,
- 4 if title passes on the premises, if that's how it's
- 5 understood in the industry and that's what it is, that
- 6 would be preempted. But if the law took effect --
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What a -- what a
- 8 fascinating area of immunity. Now what we're saying to
- 9 auction houses and everyone else is don't pass title
- 10 until you get to the slaughterhouse.
- MR. WELLS: Well, Your Honor, it's just -- I
- 12 mean, I think the -- the real question is what has the
- 13 Federal Government said about nonambulatory animals in
- 14 general, and are those amenable species and may they
- 15 be -- may they be slaughtered and turned into food? And
- 16 the Federal regulations deal directly with that
- 17 situation. So whether title passes before or after, if
- 18 the animal is on the Federal premises, there are a whole
- 19 series of Federal regulations that tell the
- 20 slaughterhouse worker exactly what the worker is
- 21 supposed to do with that animal.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Does -- does that mean that
- 23 a State could actually pass a law and create a facility,
- 24 let's say, that says -- the law says the trucks have to
- 25 stop at the State facility before it gets to the

- 1 slaughterhouse, and at the State facility, we'll check
- 2 to see whether there are nonambulatory animals, and make
- 3 sure that those animals don't go on to the
- 4 slaughterhouse. Would a State be within its rights to
- 5 do that?
- 6 MR. WELLS: Your Honor, the language of
- 7 section 603(a) says that the inspection is to occur
- 8 before they enter the slaughterhouse. Now, that has
- 9 been interpreted by the Secretary to essentially mean
- 10 immediately before, so -- so trucks in line.
- 11 So I think, under -- under Your Honor's
- 12 hypothetical, if the State had set up their own
- inspection program right immediately outside of a -- of
- 14 a Federally inspected slaughterhouse, that currently
- 15 would be within the scope of the FMIA, because that's
- 16 how the Secretary has defined it. The further upstream
- 17 it goes, though, the -- the less likely it is to be
- 18 expressly preempted.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if they do it at the
- 20 weigh station the truck has to stop at when it enters
- 21 the State, that would be okay?
- MR. WELLS: That would not be expressly
- 23 preempted, Your Honor. There might be implied
- 24 preemption issues.
- 25 And if there are no further questions, I'd

- 1 like to reserve my remaining --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 3 Mr. Horwich.
- 4 ORAL ARGUMENT OF BENJAMIN J. HORWICH,
- 5 FOR UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
- 6 SUPPORTING THE PETITIONER
- 7 MR. HORWICH: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 8 please the Court:
- 9 I haven't heard any quarrel this morning
- 10 with the proposition that if an animal goes down, say,
- 11 as it's entering the abattoir to be slaughtered, that
- 12 the State cannot at that point tell the slaughterhouse
- 13 how it is to handle that animal.
- But that is not any different, of course,
- 15 than the situation where a pig goes down as it's coming
- 16 off the truck, or it presents as nonambulatory when the
- 17 gates of the truck are open, because it's still an
- 18 operational consideration; the same humane handling
- 19 requirements still apply. It's still a State
- 20 requirement and it's not -- it's still different from
- 21 the Federal requirements.
- 22 So the Court's questions this morning I
- 23 think have gone to kind of the situations at the
- 24 margins, at the extreme. So let me try to -- try to
- 25 address some of those questions.

- 1 The -- the question about whether -- the
- 2 question about the purchase of the nonambulatory animal
- 3 and the regulation, the regulation there, the first
- 4 thing is, as a practical matter, I think you have to
- 5 think about it in a concrete situation, which is that
- 6 there is a nonambulatory animal that's on the
- 7 slaughterhouse premises. That's the hypothetical that
- 8 we are in. And the question is what is the
- 9 slaughterhouse employee to do with that animal. And the
- 10 State law says well, you can't buy it, you can't hold
- it, you can't receive it, you can't turn it into meat,
- 12 and you have to immediately euthanize it.
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, before you get to that
- 14 point, the animal has to be transported. Does Federal
- 15 law regulate for humane purposes the transportation of
- 16 animals to slaughterhouses?
- 17 MR. HORWICH: There are Federal laws
- 18 regarding transportation. The Federal Meat Inspection
- 19 Act has not been interpreted by the secretary to apply
- 20 specifically to trucks that are in transit, although I
- 21 should say that the secretary has, for example,
- 22 interpreted the FMIA -- and this is in Part 309.1(b) to
- 23 apply, at least to the extent of humane handling, to
- 24 pens at stockyards that are committed exclusively to a
- 25 slaughterhouse.

- 1 And I think if there were a situation such
- 2 as I think, Justice Kagan, your hypothetical envisioned,
- 3 where a State determined that it wanted to essentially
- 4 assert an inspection jurisdiction over animals that were
- 5 in transit to a slaughterhouse, so essentially between
- 6 the pen and the slaughterhouse, the secretary might well
- 7 recognize that -- that his authority needs to extend,
- 8 needs to extend to those, because the purpose of the
- 9 act, after all, is to set a Federal inspection standard
- 10 for animals to determine if they are suitable to be
- 11 turned into meat. And in your --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if the Federal -- if
- 13 Congress has not chosen to regulate the transportation
- 14 of animals to prevent inhumane treatment in transit, why
- 15 should a State law that aims at that objective be
- 16 preempted?
- 17 MR. HORWICH: Well, if you -- if you
- 18 disagree with -- if you disagree with me about the scope
- 19 of the FMIA in that regard, the State law with respect
- 20 to the handling of the animals while they are in transit
- 21 wouldn't be preempted. But of course the injunction
- 22 that I understand Petitioners to be seeking is not one
- 23 that goes to State regulation of trucks, but rather to
- 24 State regulation of animals that are on the
- 25 slaughterhouse premises. And the secretary has made

- 1 unmistakably clear that the scope of the FMIA is at
- 2 least as large as the official slaughter establishment's
- 3 premises.
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if the State could
- 5 inspect the trucks at a weigh station before they get to
- 6 the slaughterhouse, why can't they do the same thing
- 7 when they get to the slaughterhouse, where it's more
- 8 practical to do that?
- 9 MR. HORWICH: Well, accepting the premise of
- 10 your hypothetical that the State could do the inspection
- 11 on the truck --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: Do you dispute -- you
- 13 dispute that?
- MR. HORWICH: I dispute that, but I'll
- 15 accept that premise. Even if I accept that premise, the
- 16 question here is different because the secretary has
- 17 drawn a line that says the scope of the FMIA -- and
- 18 that's -- the question is the scope of Federal law here.
- 19 That's in section 678. The secretary has made very
- 20 clear that the scope of the FMIA extends to -- to all
- 21 animals that are on the premises of the establishment.
- 22 That's -- you can look at appendix --
- 23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So is there anything
- 24 saved to the States? I mean, there is a savings clause.
- 25 Once you get to the entrance to the slaughterhouse, is

- 1 there any room for any State regulation?
- 2 MR. HORWICH: Absolutely, Justice Ginsburg.
- 3 I mean, State laws of general applicability would, to
- 4 the extent they don't in some particular application
- 5 introduce into the scope of the FMIA, they would apply.
- 6 And I also want to be very clear, so that
- 7 there's no mistaking the government's position: State
- 8 prosecutions for animal cruelty are not preempted to the
- 9 extent they are prosecuting conduct that is unlawful
- 10 under Federal law, because that is -- that is an example
- 11 of a State that is not applying a different or an
- 12 additional standard of conduct, but simply adding --
- 13 applying its own sanction for conduct that Federal law
- 14 would similarly sanction. So there is absolutely room
- 15 for State, the application of State law on the premises
- 16 of the slaughterhouse.
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: In that respect, do State
- 18 inspectors routinely go on the premises of
- 19 slaughterhouses to ensure that their coextensive laws
- 20 are properly enforced? And if that's so, are there
- 21 problems of judgment, that a Federal inspector says, no,
- 22 this is okay under Federal law and the State official
- 23 says, no, this is not okay under the State law, even
- 24 though they say the same thing?
- MR. HORWICH: I'm -- I am not aware that in

- 1 general State inspectors or other State officials would
- 2 go to the Federally inspected premises as a general
- 3 matter. But let's assume for the sake of argument that
- 4 they were and then your question -- excuse me --
- 5 presents the question about these sort of differences in
- 6 judgment that might be made. The Federal regulations
- 7 generally provide that the disposition made by
- 8 veterinarians, by Federal veterinarians, is the
- 9 conclusive judgment of the secretary as to the fitness
- 10 of the animal for turning into meat. And so in that
- 11 situation, the State official would not be able to reach
- 12 a different judgment on that question.
- 13 And so I -- so I think that would resolve
- 14 any situation where State officials were there. Of
- 15 course, the situation where State officials do
- 16 inspections is the one that the act itself envisions and
- 17 that California has not taken the opportunity to
- 18 implement, which is for intrastate-only plants States
- 19 can enact their own inspection regulations and have
- 20 their own inspectors there as long as they are following
- 21 Federal standards at a minimum.
- JUSTICE BREYER: What am I supposed to do --
- 23 I have a quick procedural question, which I think is
- 24 similar to Justice Ginsburg's. Suppose this is three
- 25 sections, the State law, and some of them have three

- 1 parts. Suppose I thought, well, the word "buy" -- I
- 2 mean, "buy" might cover an awful lot of things that
- 3 don't have much to do with operations. Maybe sometimes
- 4 they do. Suppose I ended up thinking that, but I
- 5 thought you were right about all the rest of it. What
- 6 am I supposed to do?
- 7 MR. HORWICH: Well, I would like to have an
- 8 opportunity to take issue with your premise. But the
- 9 answer your question --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: No, no, no. I'm just doing
- 11 that hypothetically.
- MR. HORWICH: Yes. The answer to your
- 13 question is this case comes here on preliminary
- injunction, so I think the Court could appropriately
- 15 articulate its answer and its understanding of the
- 16 different provisions, and that probably would then lead
- 17 to the lower courts working out the particulars of the
- 18 injunction.
- 19 But let me actually make a point in that
- 20 regard about what the injunction might or might not look
- 21 like with respect to the buying provision, which is that
- 22 I don't understand the State to have some free-floating
- 23 interest in when title or does not pass. The State is
- 24 interested in regulating what animals can be purchased
- 25 because of a background principle of State law that I

- 1 assume exists, that slaughterhouses can't slaughter
- 2 things they don't own.
- 3 And if you put those two pieces together,
- 4 the ban on buying is nothing, is nothing but doing in
- 5 two steps what the State clearly can't do in one step,
- 6 which is tell slaughterhouses how they are to deal with
- 7 an animal that is on their premises. At least they
- 8 can't -- States can't tell slaughterhouses how to do
- 9 that when there is a Federal regulation on the subject.
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do we have to peel this
- onion in order to decide this case? Do we have to go
- 12 through each little provision of the statute and say,
- 13 this is in, this is out, this is in, this is out? Can't
- 14 we just either affirm or reverse the particular
- 15 preliminary injunction that was -- that was issued here?
- 16 MR. HORWICH: I think the Court could, could
- 17 do that, although I think there is some concern that if
- 18 the Court were to find -- to have some concern with some
- 19 specific aspects of the injunction -- and I guess I
- 20 would let Petitioner's counsel speak to this -- there
- 21 would be some concern that vacating the injunction so
- 22 that it could be corrected would leave the -- the
- 23 Petitioner in a spot where it wouldn't have protection
- 24 from the vast majority of provisions.
- JUSTICE BREYER: I have exactly Justice

- 1 Scalia's question. Do we have to write an 11-part
- 2 opinion where we treat each of these different things,
- 3 which are different, separately and analyze it? To
- 4 write an 11 part opinion or do we treat each of these
- 5 differently separately and analyze it. I'm not trying
- 6 to get out of work. I just want to know.
- 7 (Laughter.)
- 8 MR. HORWICH: Well, I think -- I think the
- 9 Court --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I'd like to get out of the
- 11 work, to tell you the truth.
- 12 (Laughter.)
- MR. HORWICH: The right way to get out of
- 14 the work would be to understand that -- that California
- 15 has made every effort here to implement a provision
- 16 that -- to implement one underlying requirement, which
- 17 is that it wants to tell slaughterhouses: Don't turn
- 18 these animals into food immediately; euthanize them
- 19 instead, and the rest of these are just ways of
- 20 implementing that underlying requirement. And this
- 21 answers your question --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose we agree with you
- 23 about that. We say, if I agree with you about that,
- there we are, you're supposed to pick up this animal
- 25 which is on the slaughterhouse floor and kill it right

- 1 away. That seems to have to do with operations. All
- 2 the rest of these other ten provisions are just
- 3 variations on that theme, according to the government,
- 4 and we send it back to them to argue this out below.
- 5 MR. HORWICH: If there would be anything
- 6 left to argue out below at that point.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, there are ten other
- 8 parts. There are ten other parts.
- 9 MR. HORWICH: Well, there are the ten
- 10 points, but I actually want to answer -- well --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You want to give a
- 12 one-sentence answer?
- MR. HORWICH: I think I can.
- 14 -- Justice Sotomayor's question, which is
- 15 about the sale of the meat, which again I think fits
- 16 under the rubric that it's just implementing the
- 17 underlying prohibition that California seeks here.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 19 Ms. Smith.
- 20 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SUSAN K. SMITH
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- MS. SMITH: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 23 please the Court:
- 24 In order to be preempted here, the State
- 25 provisions have to be -- excuse me -- the State law

- 1 provisions have to be within the scope of the act and
- 2 with respect to the premises, facilities, and
- 3 operations. None of the State provisions are within the
- 4 scope and some are not even operations.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Who defines the scope?
- 6 MS. SMITH: The scope are the mandates of
- 7 Federal law dealing with the method, quality, and
- 8 marketing of turning animals into meat for human
- 9 consumption.
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. So now
- 11 explain how under your definition it's not among at
- 12 least one of those?
- MS. SMITH: None of the provisions are
- 14 within the scope because California is not regulating
- 15 animals that are going to be turned into meat. And the
- 16 Federal Meat Inspection Act, the purpose of the act, the
- 17 legislative history of the act show, that the scope of
- 18 the act is concerned with animals that are going to
- 19 become meat.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, is that true, Ms.
- 21 Smith? I thought that under the Federal program some of
- these animals could become meat, that under the Federal
- 23 program you take a nonambulatory animal and you say,
- 24 well, some of them might be condemned, but some of them
- 25 are suspect, and if they are only suspect it may be that

- 1 eventually they will be turned into meat.
- 2 MS. SMITH: That is correct. But the entire
- 3 purpose of the act is to inspect and examine animals to
- 4 determine whether or not their meat will be wholesome
- 5 and unadulterated.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, no, no. Provisions
- 7 of the act, at least as amended, also require humane
- 8 treatment of the animals while they are being processed.
- 9 That has nothing to do with whether the meat is any
- 10 good. It has to do with humane treatment of the
- 11 animals.
- MS. SMITH: The humane treatment of the
- 13 animals deals with animals in the connection of
- 14 slaughter or while being slaughtered. And the animals
- 15 that California is regulating, the nonambulatory animals
- 16 that we're withdrawing from the process, will not be
- 17 slaughtered, will not be turned into meat. Even the --
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Wait. You mean the Federal
- 19 requirements of humane treatment do not apply once the
- 20 slaughterhouse decides that this animal will not be
- 21 slaughtered for meat; then the slaughterhouse can do
- 22 whatever it wants with the poor animal? That can't be
- 23 right.
- 24 MS. SMITH: Well, the language of the
- 25 regulations, the Federal regulations dealing with U.S.

- 1 condemned animals, for instance, say that U.S. condemned
- 2 animals shall be killed and shall not be slaughtered and
- 3 dressed in the same facility with animals that will be
- 4 turned into meat. So even in the regulations there is a
- 5 distinction between animals that will be slaughtered for
- 6 meat and that will be edible and ones that are -- are
- 7 condemned --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: What about the --
- 9 MS. SMITH: -- and will be killed.
- 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: What about the provision
- 11 that says that they will not be exposed to sharp --
- 12 sharp instruments that can injure them? Does that apply
- 13 to only those that are going to be sold for meat.
- MS. SMITH: It applies to -- well,
- 15 specifically the provisions in the Federal Meat
- 16 Inspection Act apply to the animals that are going to be
- 17 turned into meat. To the extent that they apply to
- 18 other animals or all animals as has been referenced,
- 19 they would be pursuant -- those provisions would be
- 20 pursuant to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, which
- 21 is -- does not have a preemption clause and does not --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, wait, no. But that
- 23 act amends, amends, the act that does have a preemption
- 24 clause.
- MS. SMITH: Correct.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: And therefore it seems to
- 2 me the preemption clause applies to the humane
- 3 provisions as well.
- 4 MS. SMITH: It applies to the humane
- 5 provision with animals -- with respect to the animals in
- 6 connection with slaughter and that will be slaughtered,
- 7 with respect to the Federal Meat Inspection Act.
- 8 Because the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act was not
- 9 incorporated into the Federal Meat Inspection Act, it
- 10 does not have an express preemption clause, and there is
- 11 no language in the text of that act, the Humane Methods
- 12 Act, or in the legislative history showing that it was
- 13 an attempt to Federalize animal cruelty law, for
- 14 instance. So the idea that --
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Just in slaughterhouses. I
- 16 mean, to the extent it's incorporated in that act, it
- only applies to humane treatment by slaughterhouses,
- 18 right?
- 19 MS. SMITH: Correct. 603 and 610 of the
- 20 Federal Meat Inspection Act reference the Humane Methods
- 21 Act and reference that that is to be applied when the
- 22 animals are in the -- being processed in the connection
- 23 with slaughter and being slaughtered. So again, it
- 24 is -- it is limited to the animals that, that are going
- 25 to become meat under the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But they don't --
- 2 you don't know whether they are going to become meat
- 3 until after the Federal process of post-mortem
- 4 inspection and all of that and your rules seem to
- 5 prohibit that.
- 6 MS. SMITH: Our rules -- well the ante-
- 7 mortem inspection and post-mortem inspection are
- 8 required of animals that are going to be turned into
- 9 meat, correct. And our -- the California law does not
- 10 touch on post-mortem inspection at all. And only in the
- 11 case -- excuse me. And as far as --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, but I mean
- 13 your -- your argument up to this point has been that
- 14 this doesn't interfere with the Federal laws because the
- 15 Federal laws are designed only to deal with meat that is
- 16 for consumption. And you say with your -- with respect
- 17 to your animals, that's not what it is.
- But here, as I understand the Petitioner's
- 19 and the government's position, it is that nonambulatory
- 20 animals can be turned into meat for consumption. So you
- 21 don't know whether it fits under the definition of the
- 22 State law until you've violated it.
- MS. SMITH: No, because when an animal
- 24 becomes nonambulatory it is readily apparent. That's a
- 25 characteristic that is readily apparent. And in -- at

- 1 least in California, when the animal becomes
- 2 nonambulatory the requirement would be to immediately
- 3 euthanize the animal because it's not part of the meat
- 4 supply system.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: But that's exactly where the
- 6 California system diverges from the Federal system,
- 7 because under the Federal system you separate the animal
- 8 out and then you take a look at it and then you decide
- 9 whether that animal can continue to go through the
- 10 process and eventually become meat or whether you
- 11 euthanize it. So the California system commands an
- 12 action that the Federal system say may be necessary but
- may not be.
- 14 MS. SMITH: It commands an action, but it's
- 15 not within the scope of the act, because at the very
- 16 outset California is saying that these animals are not
- 17 to be part of the meat supply system in California.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but the Federal system
- 19 has said maybe they should be part of the meat supply
- 20 system.
- 21 MS. SMITH: They may be part of the meat
- 22 supply system, but it's not required. It's not --
- 23 nonambulatory animals are not --
- JUSTICE BREYER: But in any case -- look,
- 25 this is a simple question that occurs. I am an

- 1 inspector at a Federally inspected meat facility. I
- 2 look around and there is a -- a cow and it's lying down,
- 3 all right. It seems to me that your law says I have to
- 4 go over and see that it is immediately euthanized.
- Now, how is that not what is forbidden, any
- 6 requirement -- the exact words are -- "in addition to or
- 7 different from the Federal requirements governing the
- 8 operations of that Federal meatpacking facility."
- 9 The Federal law does not require me
- 10 immediately to go over and euthanize the cow. Your law
- 11 does require me to go over and immediately euthanize the
- 12 cow. And therefore, your law seems an additional
- 13 requirement in respect to the operations of a meat
- 14 pack -- a Federally inspected meatpacking facility.
- 15 Now, that seems to me the obvious simple argument that
- 16 people have been making and I would like to know your
- 17 obvious simple answer.
- 18 MS. SMITH: Certainly, Your Honor. The
- 19 euthanization is an operation of the slaughterhouse.
- 20 But this, California's provision, is not within the
- 21 scope. And pursuant to 678, to be expressly preempted
- 22 it has to be within the scope and with respect to
- 23 operations.
- So with respect to that provision, the
- 25 euthanization provision, we concede that it is, it is

- 1 part of the operations. But it is not within the scope
- 2 because we are dealing with an animal that California
- 3 has deemed as not part, as -- excuse me --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I understood that the
- 5 Federal regulation -- you can correct me if I'm
- 6 misunderstanding -- is that if there is a suspect animal
- 7 of any kind that it requires a slaughterhouse to wait
- 8 until the Federal inspector comes and finds out whether
- 9 it's just suspect or it's something that can't be sold.
- 10 And the reason why the inspection occurs as
- 11 I understand it is that there are some diseases that are
- 12 so contagious that if the inspector decides that that
- animal is carrying that disease that the whole lot will
- 14 be quarantined or otherwise destroyed. So are you
- 15 fighting with -- that that's what the purpose of
- 16 pre-inspection under the Federal system is for?
- 17 MS. SMITH: The distinction I would make,
- 18 Your Honor, is that the purpose of the ante-mortem
- 19 inspection is to determine if the -- if the animal's
- 20 meat will be wholesome and unadulterated. To the extent
- 21 that the pre-inspection or the inspection also finds
- 22 diseases that can be passed on to other animals or, or
- 23 to the rest of the herd, that's -- that's certainly a
- 24 benefit, but it's not part of the purpose of the Federal
- 25 Meat Inspection Act.

1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm having a hard time drawing that distinction. If there is a valid purpose 2 3 to the pre-mortem inspection -- and I can't see how you can argue otherwise -- that there may be some diseases 4 5 that are so contagious that the entire lot, ambulatory 6 or nonambulatory swine, are affected, then I don't see 7 how you can argue that you aren't trenching on the scope of the statute. If the scope of the statute is to 8 9 ensure that meat is unadulterated and if there is the 10 risk of contagion, that has to be within the scope. 11 MS. SMITH: Two points. One, the diseases 12 that were referenced by the amicus dealing with this are 13 diseases that will be passed to the animals, not to 14 humans. 15 And the second point is that the - the 16 purpose again of the act as specified in 602 is to make 17 sure that the meat of the animal is wholesome and 18 unadulterated. And the ante-mortem inspection will 19 occur for every animal that goes into the meat supply 20 system. 21 So if California withdraws a nonambulatory 22 animal, it doesn't receive the ante-mortem inspection, 23 it's not going into the meat supply system. But all of 24 the other animals in that pen that are ambulatory,

pursuant to the Federal law will receive that

25

- 1 ante-mortem inspection and will by the inspector, the
- 2 veterinarian, be declared disease free or not. So they
- 3 will find -- they will be able to find those diseases in
- 4 the ambulatory animals and the ones that are going into
- 5 the meat supply system.
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: So I suppose what you're
- 7 saying, Ms. Smith, is that California or any State is
- 8 entitled to take certain categories of animals outside
- 9 of the whole process, to exclude certain categories of
- 10 animals from the whole process and so to exclude them,
- 11 if you will, from of the scope of this chapter. And
- 12 much as the Seventh Circuit said a State can simply
- 13 exclude horses from the scope of this statute, you're
- 14 saying a State can exclude nonambulatory swine from the
- 15 scope of this statute.
- But then you have to, you know, ask yourself
- 17 the question: Are nonambulatory swine so easily
- 18 excludable as horses. Why couldn't the State then
- 19 exclude swine with various kinds of diseases? And then
- 20 it would be clear that the State was doing something
- 21 that the Federal statute is supposed to be doing.
- MS. SMITH: Your Honor, if your question is,
- 23 would that be preempted if California excluded pursuant
- 24 to other diseases, it would not be expressly preempted.
- 25 So California can make decisions on categories of

- 1 animals, here nonambulatory swine, and the express -- it
- 2 would not be expressly preempted. There may be
- 3 questions about conflict preemption, but in this
- 4 particular case, conflict preemption was litigated in
- 5 the Ninth Circuit and the Ninth Circuit found that there
- 6 was no conflict preemption.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, it's an additional
- 8 requirement. I don't know why it's conflict preemption.
- 9 It's express preemption. If indeed the Federal
- 10 regulations say that these diseases disqualify the
- 11 animal from being slaughtered and sold as meat, and
- 12 California says no, we think additional diseases should
- 13 disqualify the slaughter and sale, that's an additional
- 14 requirement. I don't know how you say that's somehow
- 15 conflict preemption. It's express preemption.
- 16 MS. SMITH: It's not expressly preempted
- 17 because it's not within the scope, because California is
- 18 not putting requirements on animals --
- 19 JUSTICE SCALIA: You keep saying "not within
- 20 the scope." I don't know what you mean by "not within
- 21 the scope." Why is it not within the scope?
- MS. SMITH: Because the scope of the Federal
- 23 Meat Inspection Act does not include every animal on the
- 24 premises of a slaughterhouse. It's limited by the
- 25 language of the text of the Federal Meat Inspection Act

- 1 and the authority given to the Secretary.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Right, and what -- what
- 3 limits it? What enables the State to disqualify other
- 4 diseases that the Federal law does not disqualify?
- 5 MS. SMITH: California would -- there is no
- 6 requirement in -- there is nothing in the text of the
- 7 Federal act that specifies that States cannot withdraw
- 8 animals based --
- 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: "No additional
- 10 requirements" is what the act says.
- 11 MS. SMITH: Correct. But that is -- no
- 12 additional requirements going to animals that are going
- 13 to become meat. If California -- if California had a --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, it doesn't say that.
- 15 It says "no additional requirements" with respect to all
- 16 of the operations, both the operations that pertain to
- 17 those animals that are later sold as meat and the
- 18 operations that pertain to those animals that are
- 19 slaughtered and whose carcasses are burned or disposed
- 20 of. How do you get the limitation to only those animals
- 21 that are -- that are slaughtered for meat?
- 22 MS. SMITH: Because it's also within the
- 23 scope. Within the scope is part of the -- of the -- of
- 24 678. The express preemption clause references within
- 25 the scope of the chapter with respect to premises,

- 1 facilities, and operations. So there -- the scope of
- 2 the chapter must be considered in terms of what the
- 3 purpose is, what the language of the text allows the
- 4 Federal Government to --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So your argument is
- 6 that because the act doesn't speak to whether or not
- 7 cats and dogs and horses can be sold as meat, you can
- 8 also say it's not within the scope because it doesn't
- 9 speak to specifically whether nonambulatory animals can
- 10 be sold as meat or not.
- 11 MS. SMITH: Correct, and since Mr. --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that seems to
- 13 me -- what you're saying then with respect to animals
- 14 that are slaughtered in a slaughterhouse is that the
- 15 difference is that the State law says you can't sell
- 16 that as meat while the Federal law says you can. Right?
- 17 In other words, you're saying, well, just because the
- 18 Federal law says you can, doesn't mean that the State
- 19 can't say you can't.
- MS. SMITH: Correct.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Correct? Well,
- 22 isn't the exact flip side of saying you can sell it is
- 23 that -- that you can't sell it, is that you can. So
- 24 when the Federal law says you can, that preempts the
- 25 rule from the States that says you can't.

- 1 MS. SMITH: Well, the Federal law doesn't
- 2 say you must. It does not say you must sell the meat or
- 3 you must --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: We are not talking about
- 5 conflict preemption. If it said you must and the State
- 6 says you can't, then there would be conflict preemption.
- 7 But we are talking about express preemption, which says
- 8 in so many words no additional requirements. And I
- 9 don't know how you can get around the fact that this is
- 10 an additional requirement.
- MS. SMITH: Because the "no additional
- 12 requirements" has to be qualified within the scope of
- 13 the act.
- JUSTICE BREYER: It does, you're right.
- 15 You're right. I see where you're going. It says we are
- 16 talking about regulations that are within the scope of
- 17 the act. But I had assumed that that means we are not
- 18 talking about airplanes; we are talking about the
- 19 subject matter of the act. And so is this the kind of
- 20 regulation that is within the subject matter of the act?
- 21 And it seems to be. It has to do with how you slaughter
- 22 animals.
- It has to -- I mean, if you're going to be
- 24 so specific as to say the only things that are within
- 25 the scope of the act are the specific requirements that

- 1 are there already in the Federal act, then this
- 2 prohibition against extra, extra regulations means
- 3 nothing.
- I mean, it can't mean that. So it just
- 5 means the subject matter. And now if it means the
- 6 subject matter, then why don't you lose?
- 7 MS. SMITH: This -- Well, even if one looks
- 8 at the subject matter instead of the scope of the act --
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: What do you mean, instead
- 10 of? What is the scope of the act? Are you saying the
- 11 scope of the act refers only to those particular
- 12 provisions that are already in the act, requirements
- 13 already there?
- MS. SMITH: Yes, the scope of the act --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes? Then why did they put
- in something saying you can't add anything?
- 17 MS. SMITH: Because the "in addition to" is
- 18 qualified by on the -- "with respect to the premises,
- 19 facilities, and operations and within the scope of the
- 20 act."
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But you define the scope
- 22 almost exclusively by purpose and regulatory power is
- 23 broader than purpose. I mean, as is reflected by the
- 24 regulations here which are dealing not merely with
- 25 animals that are adulterated, but are dealing with the

- 1 whole process of what happens from the minute they
- 2 arrive to the minute they are sold. So if we don't
- 3 accept your limitation based on a scope being defined by
- 4 purpose, how do you win?
- 5 MS. SMITH: If one looks at the authority
- 6 given to the Secretary as well in 621, the authority is
- 7 specified as dealing with -- or making sure that no
- 8 adulterated meat or any carcass, part of carcass, meat
- 9 food product, therefore is not adulterated. So the
- 10 focus in 621 on the Secretary's authority is on making
- 11 sure that the -- that the meat is not adulterated.
- 12 So -- so it's not simply the -- the purpose of the act
- 13 at 602, but also the scope of the authority given to the
- 14 Secretary.
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, you seem to be
- 16 assuming that in effecting its obligations that only
- 17 when it finds adulterated meat is that within the scope.
- 18 The government has basically said: We have got to
- 19 figure out if it is and this is how we are going to do
- 20 it: We are going to do it starting from the receipt of
- 21 the swine through its sale, and we are going to have
- 22 inspections all through the process, whether or not the
- 23 meat will ultimately be sold or not; our scope is what
- 24 happens in that slaughterhouse. That --
- MS. SMITH: Correct. But the -- the focus

- of the Secretary's authority, as well as the specified
- 2 purpose of the act, is focused on not all animals, but
- 3 animals that will eventually become meat and making the
- 4 determination by inspections or examinations, whether or
- 5 not -- whether or not those swine or those meat will be
- 6 wholesome and not adulterated.
- JUSTICE BREYER: I didn't see your argument
- 8 and now I see it. Okay. So I understand where you're
- 9 going.
- 10 But then if I look at Section 610 of the
- 11 act, it has a whole bunch of prohibitions, including
- 12 prohibitions and references to how you slaughter
- 13 animals, and including how you slaughter animals
- 14 humanely. So there how do you say that this provision
- 15 which talks about euthanizing an animal that you look
- 16 around and is lying down, how is that not within the
- 17 scope of the act? I'm not saying that they have that
- 18 particular thing, but the subject matter, slaughtering
- 19 animals, indeed humanely, is something the act
- 20 absolutely deals with.
- 21 MS. SMITH: It -- As I mentioned earlier,
- 22 it's certainly part of the operations. Euthanization
- 23 is --
- 24 JUSTICE BREYER: No, I didn't say that. I
- 25 said yes, it's part of the operations, but also it's the

- 1 subject matter with which the act deals. The act deals
- 2 with the humane slaughter of animals and other forms of
- 3 slaughter of humane -- of animals. So how -- how is --
- 4 So I repeat my question.
- 5 MS. SMITH: It deals with animals in
- 6 connection with slaughter and that will be slaughtered,
- 7 and so to the extent that that -- that slaughter is seen
- 8 as an animal that is going towards the meat supply
- 9 system, as opposed to one that's condemned and being
- 10 killed and not -- not --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. I -- You see, I --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't think that's what
- 13 within the scope means. The preemption provision here
- 14 in the statute has two provisions. The first one which
- is the one we are talking about says requirements within
- 16 the scope of this chapter with respect to premises,
- 17 facilities and operations which are in addition to or
- 18 different than those made under this chapter may not be
- 19 imposed.
- That's the first one, okay? Requirements
- 21 within the scope with respect to premises, facilities.
- Now the second preemption provision reads:
- 23 "marking, labeling, packaging or ingredient requirements
- 24 in addition to or different than those made under this
- 25 chapter." Now, I -- I read the difference between those

- 1 two being, under number two it has to be different from
- 2 something that has been made, whereas under number one
- 3 it just has to be different from anything that could
- 4 have been made under this chapter.
- 5 It's within the scope of the chapter. It's
- 6 within the Secretary's authority to prescribe under this
- 7 chapter. I think that's what Congress meant by the
- 8 difference between requirements within the scope and in
- 9 number two, "in addition to or different than those
- 10 made, " and that to my mind is -- is a much more
- 11 plausible explanation of "within the scope" than, you
- 12 know, it's directed to the purpose of -- of the statute.
- 13 I don't think within the scope has anything
- 14 to do with the purpose. It has to do with whether the
- 15 Secretary is authorized to act in this field under the
- 16 chapter.
- 17 MS. SMITH: And as -- as I mentioned, the
- 18 Secretary is given in several -- several different
- 19 points authority to act under this chapter, and the
- 20 Secretary's authority is -- is circumscribed to making
- 21 sure that meat is not adulterated and setting up
- 22 inspections --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry; you're not
- 24 seriously arguing that the Secretary couldn't regulate
- 25 in the manner California has? That the Secretary is

- 1 powerless under this Act to say you can't slaughter
- 2 animals that can't walk?
- MS. SMITH: No. The Secretary has done --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The Secretary could do
- 5 that?
- 6 MS. SMITH: Yes. The Secretary -- yes.
- 7 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Because that would be a
- 8 requirement? Is that -- is that -- do you rely heavily
- 9 on -- on the distinction between a requirement and
- 10 something that's merely permissive?
- MS. SMITH: No, we don't. Our -- our focus
- is on -- on the scope of the act and not on
- 13 requirements. We -- we concede that the -- that
- 14 California statute is setting out requirements, the
- 15 requirements in the penal code dealing with animal
- 16 cruelty in -- in areas traditionally regulated by the
- 17 State. So we -- we do not dispute that the -- the
- 18 provisions in the State law are requirements.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: But suppose, Ms. Smith, you
- 20 decided that the Secretary was not doing a good job in
- 21 terms of inspecting for disease. So I guess that there
- 22 is some disease called diamond skin disease which
- 23 affects a lot of pigs, and you just thought that the
- 24 inspection standards were far too lenient; and you said,
- 25 okay we are not going to allow pigs with diamond skin

- 1 disease to be slaughtered. Under your theory you could
- 2 do that, too, isn't that right?
- MS. SMITH: Yes, we could because we would
- 4 be categorically withdrawing the animal from -- form the
- 5 process. I want to be clear, though, we are not -- with
- 6 this law we are not setting up an inspection and
- 7 examination process. It's -- this provision is in the
- 8 penal code. It's an animal -- it's within the animal
- 9 cruelty statutes. It is not an attempt to --
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: But in fact it requires a
- 11 parallel inspection system. It's trying to do the exact
- 12 same thing that the Secretary is trying to do, which is
- 13 trying to remove animals with a certain kind of disease,
- 14 and it requires an inspection system of its own.
- 15 MS. SMITH: In our -- our case or your
- 16 hypothetical?
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: In my hypothetical case.
- 18 MS. SMITH: In your hypothetical --
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: And then I think that the
- 20 cases seem similar to make.
- MS. SMITH: Well, it -- it would not be
- 22 expressly preempted, the hypothetical that you have
- 23 given me because we are withdrawing these animals within
- 24 the scope of the Act. There may be questions about
- 25 conflict preemption in that -- in that example, but with

- 1 respect to what we are doing, what the California
- 2 provision is doing there, it's not setting up a parallel
- 3 provision. It's not trying to set up a --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: The other argument is that
- 5 it is within the scope of the Act because it is
- 6 preeminently something that the Secretary is authorized
- 7 to regulate, this nefarious diamond skin disease which
- 8 we are all familiar with. It's within the scope of the
- 9 Act, because he could act and indeed is -- is told to
- 10 act to prevent stuff like that. And that's why it's
- 11 within the scope of the Act for California to do
- 12 something in addition to what he has chosen to do.
- 13 And that's why there is a difference between
- 14 one and two, requirements within the scope, and
- 15 marketing labeling and packaging requirements in
- 16 addition to or different from those made. This one
- 17 isn't made but it is within the scope of what the
- 18 Secretary could make, and therefore California should
- 19 butt out.
- 20 MS. SMITH: Let me be precise about -- if
- 21 one saw, if one saw that -- that paragraphs (b) and (c)
- 22 of the California law were within the scope, there is
- 23 still an argument that they have to be with -- part of
- the operations, the premises, facilities and operations.
- 25 And certainly with respect to requirement (a), the

- 1 buying, selling and the sale of meat, those are not
- 2 necessarily operations; and we do dispute the -- the
- 3 factual assertion that's been made that all purchasing
- 4 happens on the -- on the slaughterhouse grounds. There
- 5 is no -- no factual record of that in the -- in the
- 6 lower record. We have no way to dispute that because it
- 7 was not -- it was not litigated.
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Suppose I agree with you on
- 9 that but don't agree with you -- or least I'm dubitante
- 10 on that and -- and disagree with you on the rest. What
- 11 do I do?
- 12 MS. SMITH: We believe the -- the law could
- 13 or would be severable. In the Ninth Circuit the
- 14 preliminary injunction went to all provisions except for
- 15 subparagraph (e). We would -- have to litigate
- 16 severability, of course, but we do think that it would
- 17 be severable, and it seems that the Ninth --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What -- what purpose
- 19 does the ban on buying and selling have, other than to
- 20 implement the restrictions that go to operations?
- 21 MS. SMITH: Well, the purpose of the
- 22 California law is twofold. One, general public health,
- 23 but there is also a very strong component of prohibiting
- 24 animal cruelty; and so prohibiting the purchase, buying,
- 25 selling or the sale of meat --

1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But that -- that seems to me to be the answer, that no, it doesn't have 2 anything else to do because the animal cruelty that 3 you're concerned about takes place on the premises as a 4 5 result of the operations. And so you prohibit the buying and selling of an animal that wasn't treated the 6 way you think it should be treated, to give effect to 7 your views on how it should or should not be treated 8 9 which seems to be expressly preempted. 10 MS. SMITH: Well, not necessarily, because the law -- if we look at the entire California penal 11 12 code section it's dealing not just with slaughterhouses. 13 So it is trying to deal with a comprehensive problem 14 that it sees with respect to nonambulatory animals, not 15 just at the slaughterhouse but at other market agencies, etcetera -- and livestock agencies and so -- so the 16 17 focus on purchasing, buying, receipt, selling of the meat is to prohibit and -- and stop the -- the commerce 18 19 in nonambulatory animals. 20 And -- and California's purpose there as I said was twofold, to one, protect general public health 21 22 but also to prohibit animal cruelty in an area where --23 where California legislators were concerned about the 24 humane treatment of nonambulatory animals, not -- not

just swine because the law is broader than that, but

25

- 1 that's what's at issue here today.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What does it include
- 3 besides swine?
- 4 MS. SMITH: It includes cattle, sheep, goats
- 5 and swine, and the preliminary injunction was brought --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But those are --
- 7 those all go through slaughterhouses?
- 8 MS. SMITH: They do. They do. And --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 10 Mr. Wells, you have 4 minutes remaining.
- 11 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF STEVEN J. WELLS
- 12 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 13 MR. WELLS: Thank you. I just have a couple
- 14 of quick points to make. One is that the Secretary has
- 15 interpreted the -- section 602 and section 603 and
- 16 section 604 to require that all animals be handled, all
- 17 animals on the premises be handled humanely and that all
- 18 animals be subject to the regulations under the chapter.
- 19 That's set forth in 9 CFR 302.3 and it's also set forth
- 20 in the Secretary's directives, it's directive 6100 at
- 21 appendix at 47.
- 22 So the Secretary does not make a distinction
- 23 in implementing section 602 through 604 between animals
- 24 that the State may choose to try to categorically
- 25 remove. It applies to all animals, and that is critical

- 1 because a State -- a slaughterhouse worker who is on the
- 2 premises needs to have one set of rules that the worker
- 3 follows so that the worker knows that if he follows the
- 4 advice of a Federal inspector and, for example, puts a
- 5 nonambulatory animal -- separates the animal, put --
- 6 puts it in a covered pen and it -- lets it go through
- 7 the ante-mortem inspection that it's required to have
- 8 under Federal law, that the slaughterhouse worker won't
- 9 go to jail.
- 10 And that's why it's critical that -- to
- 11 Congress -- that was critical to Congress that we had
- 12 this uniformity and I think it's critical that this
- 13 Court find preemption on this case, because otherwise
- 14 Federal law will appear and disappear, apparently based
- on when the State believes that it's removing animals
- 16 from -- in connection with slaughter, whenever that
- 17 would occur.
- Just one other point and that is, it is also
- 19 crystal clear that the Human Methods of Slaughter Act of
- 20 1978 incorporated the standards of humane treatment that
- 21 were included in the Human Methods of Slaughter Act of
- 22 1958, and it isn't just the preamble to that public law
- 23 that indicates that.
- Those requirements are found now in 21
- 25 U.S.C. section 603(b) and they are backed up by

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prohibitions which are backed up by criminal penalties
 1
 2
     in section -- in 21 U.S.C. section 610 -- yes, 610(b).
 3
                 And if the Court has no more questions, I'll
 4
     conclude my remarks.
 5
                 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you counsel,
 6
     counsel.
 7
                 MR. WELLS: Thank you.
 8
                 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The case is
 9
     submitted.
10
                 (Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the case in the
11
     above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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